

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (March 23, 2015):**

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**Katherine Koestner to Speak at Bethel University Wednesday, April 8**

MCKENZIE, TN – Katherine Koestner, a national expert on student safety and wellness issues, will speak at Bethel University Wednesday night, April 8 at 7:30 p.m. in Crisp Arena. The event, sponsored by the school's Department of Housing and Student Life, is part of a month-long celebration to commemorate Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April. The event is free and open to the public, and high school students as well as church youth and adult groups are encouraged to attend.

Ms. Koestner has presented to more than one million students in the U.S. As the first victim of date rape to speak out nationally and publically about her experience at The College of William and Mary, she appeared on the cover of TIME Magazine in June of 1991. HBO made a movie about her story in 1993. Ms. Koestner has appeared on The Oprah Winfrey Show, Geraldo, NBC Nightly News, CNBC Talk Live, Larry King Live, Good Morning America, Later Today, CNN, Entertainment Tonight, MTV, Lifetime Television, Italian TV, The Jane Whitney Show, The Big Idea with Donny Deutsch, and dozens of other news programs. She has given interviews for the Washington Post, New York Times, Chicago Tribune, Los Angeles Times, Philadelphia Inquirer, The Journal of Higher Education, and countless other national and regional publications.

Ms. Koestner's appearance and press conference on Capitol Hill with Congressman Jim Ramstad helped to encourage Congress, and later President George H. Bush, to pass the Campus Sexual Assault Victim's Bill of Rights into law in 1992. Ms. Koestner has keynoted over 200 conferences including the East and West Coast 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Student Conferences on Campus Sexual Violence in 1995, as well as on behalf of the New Mexico School Boards Association, the association of Maryland Independent Schools, the Pennsylvania State Educators' Association, and the U.S. Department of Defense. She has presented at the national conferences for the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), the National School Boards Association (NSBA), the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), The Association of Boarding Schools (TABS), and the Association for Student Judicial Affairs (ASJA).

At age 21, Ms. Koestner was asked to present to the incoming students at MIT, Dartmouth University, West Point, the US Naval Academy, Brown University, Amherst College, Williams College, Colorado College and many other top universities. She continues to regularly present for students and is under contract with public and private secondary and post-secondary schools throughout the country, ranging from Phillips Andover Academy and the Lawrenceville School to Brown University and Colorado College. To date, she has presented on student safety issues at over 1,500 schools in forty-nine states, Canada and numerous other international locations.

Ms. Koestner has served as a consultant to schools on the revision and development of their sexual misconduct and technology policies and response protocols. She is the architect of The Complete Sexual Misconduct Reduction and Response System and The Customizable Model Acceptable Use Policy in place at schools across the country. She

has partnered with the NFL's Jacksonville Jaguars' Foundation to work with students in twenty-four public schools in Jacksonville, Florida. The U.S. Department of Education asked Ms. Koestner to work with Tipper Gore and Bonnie Campbell in its initiative to help women at risk for sexual violence. She founded "The I Club," a national high school peer leadership organization focusing on respectful relationships, and she directs the foundation for Take Back the Night, an international organization dedicated to ending sexual violence.

In 2002, Ms. Koestner worked with MIT to create "LifeLessons: Sexual Assault 101," an interactive CD ROM for high school and college students. In 2003, she wrote and directed two films with national award-winning Top Hat Productions: "Please Write Back: Sexual Assault among America's Students" and "Helping a Sexual Assault Survivor." These thirty-minute educational videos are used by schools and rape crisis centers across the country to educate students in health classes and other community awareness programs, as well as to train faculty, police officers, coaches and other responders on the appropriate steps to take in assisting a student who reports a sexual assault experience. In 2008, Ms. Koestner developed the first Virtual Sexual Assault Response Training Center for schools, utilizing subject matter experts from Colorado College, Harvard University, the University of San Diego, Franklin and Marshall College, the University of Texas at San Antonio, and top education attorneys. This online platform enables any school to provide affordable, consistent, high-quality training and resources for their staff.

Ms. Koestner's latest energies have focused on the risks and responsibilities for students and schools with respect to technology in its many forms. She has assisted schools and school districts in developing proactive policies, procedures, risk management strategies, and educational programs around such topics as social networking sites, video phone usage, text and instant messaging, boundary setting for faculty and staff members, online gaming, identity theft, defamation of character, bullying, harassment, sexual exploitation, and a myriad of other ramifications of technology.

In 2006, Ms. Koestner developed an online education series, Parent-Connect, a powerful program that brings together parents nationwide through the internet to hear from national experts on a variety of student wellness and parenting issues, such as depression, learning differences, harassment, substance use, and high risk drinking. Additionally, her foray into the benefits of technology has also enabled her to direct an annual program to assist schools in updating their policies and procedures on an emerging issue each spring in order to stay ahead of the fast-paced curve of today's ever-changing educational landscape. She has been asked to assist fortune 500 companies, the U.S. Military, large public school districts, national public television groups, Canadian university presidents, and numerous other groups with their technology education programs.

In 2009, the U.S. Ambassador to India asked Ms. Koestner to lead the first campaign to raise awareness about violence against women in India. Ms. Koestner also keynoted the First National Take Back the Night Conference at Columbia University in November 2009, and has since become a highlight for boarding schools in annually reviewing top risk issues.

April 2010 became the first year for Take Back the Night to hold its Ten Points of Light to Take Back the Night Campaign. Her tireless campaign for safety and respect continue to lead her down new avenues toward that end. In 2010, she launched Dragonfly learning, an online educational series for parents, students and schools.

In 2011, Ms. Koestner's Foundation, Take Back the Night, was chosen by the TV Show, The Good Wife, as their charity of choice for their first ever Celebrity Golf Tournament. In November 2011, the Girl Scouts of America selected Ms. Koestner, Katie Couric, and a handful of others as honored women leaders to present for their 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. January 2012 marks the first Thaw Out the Night Benefit for Take Back the Night.

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